

21st Century Community Learning Centers 2014-15 State Evaluation Report

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Executive Summary

The 21st Century Community Learning Centers program provides federal funding for the establishment of community learning centers that provide academic and enrichment opportunities for children, particularly students who attend high-poverty and low-performing schools, to meet state and local standards in core academic subjects, through a broad array of activities that complement their regular academic programs. In addition to academics, centers are encouraged to offer participants a broad range of other services and programs, such as art, music, recreation activities, character education, career and technical training, drug and violence prevention programming, and technology education. Educational services for families of participating students, such as literacy instruction, computer training, or cultural enrichment, must also be included.

The 2014-15 program year included 163 grantees in three funding cycles, each called a cohort: Cohort 6 included 43 grantees, Cohort 6A included 56 grantees, and Cohort 7 included 64 grantees. Cohort 6 grantees were eligible to operate during summer 2014 through September 30, 2014 only, while Cohort 6A and Cohort 7 were eligible to operate the full program year, which included summer 2014 and school year 2014-15. Grantees were mainly schools, districts, or charter schools (49 percent) or community-based/nonprofit organizations (31 percent). This varied somewhat by cohort, being consistent for Cohort 6 and Cohort 7, but Cohort 6A was split with nearly half being schools and nearly half being community organizations.

EVALUATION DESIGN

The evaluation of the 2014-15 program year of 21st Century programs in Pennsylvania includes information about the programs operated under the Cohort 6, Cohort 6A, and Cohort 7 funding cycles. The timing of awards dictates what grantees report annually for evaluation.

The state evaluation of Pennsylvania's 21st Century program examined three performance measures focused on students' positive academic, social, and behavioral changes. Data sources included the new federal system 21APR, Pennsylvania Grantee Report, and monitoring reports.

The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) contracted with the Allegheny Intermediate Unit to conduct a comprehensive external evaluation of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program to fulfill federal requirements under Title IV, Part B of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended, Sections 4202 (C) and 4203 (A) and Section H-5 of the *21st Century Community Learning Centers Non-Regulatory Guidance*.

STUDENT OUTCOMES

All grantees operating during the school year were required to report reading and math report card grades and teacher-reported behavior and homework outcomes in the federal reporting system. The PA Grantee Report included student outcomes on local reading and math assessments or measures, school attendance, school behavior and discipline, and credit recovery, for grantees identifying such measures in their applications. Student outcomes data was only required for regularly attending students, which means they attended the program for 30 or more days.

Reading and Math Local Results

The PA Grantee Report collected local academic assessment results from grantees that indicated using certain assessments in their applications. Grantees (53) reported local reading results for 7,746 regularly attending students, of which 40 percent improved based on grantee-defined change, 39 percent showed no change or maintained their level, 14 percent declined, and 7 percent were reported as not needing to improve.

Grantees (43) reported local math assessment results in the PA Grantee Report for 6,536 students. Overall, 50 percent of regular attendees showed improvement according to grantee-defined change, followed by 35 percent who showed no change or maintained their level, 10 percent declined, and 5 percent did not need to improve, according to grantee-reported results. Increased program attendance appears to have had a slight positive influence on results.

School Attendance and Discipline

Grantees (93) reported school attendance results for 11,586 regular attendees in the PA Grantee Report. Results indicated that 31 percent of regular attendees included in analysis improved their school attendance, 27 percent did not need to improve, 34 percent declined, and 8 percent of students had no change in their attendance. Increased program attendance appears to have had a slight positive influence on outcomes.

Grantees (72) reported school behavior results for 8,048 regular attendees in the PA Grantee Report. Results indicated that 64 percent of regular attendees did not need to improve in this area. Of those who needed to improve, the largest portion did so (14 percent of all regular attendees improved) followed by students experiencing a decline (16 percent) and those showing no change (7 percent).

Credit Recovery

A total of 93 grantees reported on credit recovery outcomes for 2014-15. A total of 2,702 students participated in such activities during this program year, with 72 percent of these being from Cohort 6A. Of the students participating in credit recovery activities, 74 percent recovered one or more courses or credits.

2014-15 Government Performance and Results Act Measures

The federal 21st Century program established performance objectives as part of the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA). Evaluators gathered this information from results reports in the federal 21APR system.

Measure: Participants in 21st Century Community Learning Center programs will demonstrate educational and social benefits and exhibit positive behavioral changes.

Indicator	2014-15 Pennsylvania Result
Improved math grade from fall to spring	43 percent
Elementary	46 percent
Middle and high school	42 percent
Improved English (reading) grade from fall to spring	44 percent
Elementary	46 percent
Middle and high school	42 percent
Improved from not proficient to proficient or above in reading on state assessments (elementary)	<i>Not reported for 2014-15</i>
Improved from not proficient to proficient or above in math on state assessments (middle and high school)	<i>Not reported for 2014-15</i>
Improved homework completion and class participation (teacher-reported)	56 percent
Elementary	56 percent
Middle and high school	56 percent
Improved behavior (teacher-reported)	47 percent
Elementary	42 percent
Middle and high school	49 percent

CONCLUSION

Pennsylvania 21st Century programs provided a variety of academic and enrichment services to students and their families. Grantees implemented a variety of academic and enrichment activities intended to influence student outcomes. Limited information is available for the 2014-15 year because of unanticipated federal reporting system changes.

Based on evaluation findings, evaluators continue to recommend that programs focus efforts on implementing strategies to encourage regular and repeated student program attendance, as overall current and historical findings indicate that the more students attend, the greater the likelihood that they will improve on the various academic and behavioral measures.

Introduction

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION¹

The 21st Century Community Learning Centers program provides federal funding for the establishment of community learning centers that offer academic and enrichment opportunities to children, particularly students who attend high-poverty and low-performing schools, to meet state and local standards in core academic subjects through a broad array of activities that can complement their regular academic programs. Literacy and other educational services to the families of participating children must also be provided.

The 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st Century) program is authorized under Title IV, Part B of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (P.L. 107-110), as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

Pennsylvania's primary goal for its 21st Century program is to assist youth to meet state standards for core academic subjects by providing them with academic and enrichment opportunities. In addition to academics, centers are encouraged to offer participants a broad array of other services and programs during nonschool hours, such as art, music, recreation activities, character education, career and technical training, drug and violence prevention programming, and technology education. Educational services for families of participating students, such as literacy instruction, computer training, or cultural enrichment, must also be included.² Federal law requires that all 21st Century program sites provide academic enrichment activities and parental involvement activities. Programs are encouraged to use innovative instructional strategies, coordinate academics with local curricula and assessments, and use assessment data to inform instruction and evaluate results. Academics are to involve more than just helping participants with their homework and should not just repeat regular school day activities.

Pennsylvania's 21st Century program encourages active youth and family participation to ensure that both have decision-making roles in the creation, operation, and evaluation of every 21st Century program in Pennsylvania. School and community collaboration is another key in meeting the academic, social, physical, and emotional needs of children and families. Programs are to offer quarterly open house meetings and maintain an open-door policy where adult family members feel welcome and are encouraged to drop in. Grantees are required to offer parent involvement opportunities.

¹ Program information and requirements were adapted from 21st Century *Request for Proposals* documents.

² The majority of 21st Century activities are to take place during nonschool hours. However, activities for adult family members and pre-kindergarten students may take place during school hours if these times are the most appropriate to these constituents.

All activities are to be based on rigorous scientific research and the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) provides “principles of effectiveness” to guide programs in identifying and implementing programs that enhance student learning. Activities must address the needs of local schools and communities and be continuously evaluated at the local level.

Grantee Eligibility

Federal law mandates, per section 4203 (a)(3), that any public or private organization may apply for funding if it proposes to serve students who primarily attend schools eligible for schoolwide programs under Title I section 1114, or schools that serve a high percentage of students (at least 40 percent) from low-income families and the families of such students. Applicant agencies must collaborate with local education agencies when applying for funds.

Participant Eligibility

Eligible participants are public and private/nonpublic school students in pre-kindergarten through 12th grade. Programs are to target the ages and grades deemed to be at greatest risk and those students who are academically below proficiency. At-risk behaviors might include poor school performance, poor school attendance, drug or alcohol abuse, criminal activity, or any other indicators judged by the applicant as placing the child at higher risk and greater need. Adult family members of students participating in the community learning center may be served through educational activities that are appropriate for adults.

REPORTING VENUES

21APR

21st Century is a federally-authorized program operating across the nation. One of the requirements of 21st Century grantees is to complete program and outcomes reporting in the federal 21APR system, where “APR” stands for “Annual Performance Report.” This system opened for the first time in November 2015 and replaced the Profile and Performance Information Collection System (PPICS), which had been in place for the prior 10 years. The 21APR system collects information on grantees and their centers, program staffing information, activities, program attendance, student characteristics, and student outcomes based on the federal GPRA measures. Student outcome measures included state reading and math assessment data gains, reading and math report card grades, and teacher survey responses. However, state assessment outcomes were not reported in the 21APR system for 2014-15 for Pennsylvania grantees because of changes to the rigor and scoring of the 2015 PSSA, making 2014 results not comparable to 2015, as required for 21APR reporting. PDE received a waiver from the United States Department of Education (ED) related to 2015 state assessment results not being used for accountability purposes.

PA Grantee Report

The PA Grantee Report provided grantees with a method of reporting information that the 21st Century *Request for Proposals* included but is not addressed in the federal annual performance report. The report also included some optional items based on grantee request.

The Allegheny Intermediate Unit, the contracted evaluator for Pennsylvania's 21st Century program, constructed and implemented the PA Grantee Report. The report was developed so that grantees only reported on items that were applicable to their program. All grantees were required to complete this report and evaluators exported data for all grantees and analyzed it overall, by cohort, and by grantee.

Other Data Sources

Additional information was collected about grantees and their programs through monitoring site visit reports and information maintained by PDE subcontractor for technical assistance Center for Schools and Communities.

EVALUATION DESIGN

This program year's evaluation of the 21st Century program in Pennsylvania includes information about the Cohort 6, Cohort 6A, and Cohort 7 funding cycles. The 2014-15 evaluation included 163 awards (grantees): 43 grantees were in Cohort 6, 56 grantees were in Cohort 6A, and 64 grantees were in Cohort 7. Cohort 6 grantees were eligible to operate during summer 2014 through September 30, 2014 only, while Cohorts 6A and 7 were eligible to operate for the full program year, which included summer 2014 and school year 2014-15.

The evaluation of Pennsylvania's 21st Century program examined three performance measures, within which grantees established their own performance indicators. The measures included:

1. Participants in 21st Century programs will demonstrate educational and social benefits and exhibit positive behavioral changes.
2. Increasing percentages of students regularly participating in the program will meet or exceed state and local academic achievement standards in reading and math.
3. Students participating in the program will show improvement in the performance measures of school attendance, classroom performance, and reduced disciplinary referrals.

PDE contracted with the Allegheny Intermediate Unit to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program to fulfill federal requirements under Title IV, Part B of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as

amended, Sections 4202 (C) and 4203 (A) and Section H-5 of the *21st Century Community Learning Centers Non-Regulatory Guidance*:

States must conduct a comprehensive evaluation (directly, or through a grant or contract) of the effectiveness of programs and activities provided with 21st Century funds. In their applications to the Department, States are required to describe the performance indicators and performance measures they will use to evaluate local programs. States must also monitor the periodic evaluations of local programs and must disseminate the results of these evaluations to the public.

This program year's evaluation (2014-15) is different than prior years, in that a new federal reporting system (21APR) was put into place and did not open until several months after the program year had already concluded. While states had been instructed that data elements were expected to be the same, the ways in which the information was asked to be reported in the new system was different enough (though data elements were the same) that there was considerable confusion at both the state and local levels about how to prepare information for submission in the new system and some information could not be aligned. This may contribute to some discontinuity in results. Training opportunities and requests for technical assistance and guidance did not clarify all questions. Furthermore, many data elements that had been included in the prior system (PPICS) were eliminated from 21APR without states' prior knowledge. Further compounding this evaluation challenge is that data, information, nor reports of grantee-entered values are available or exportable from the federal system, meaning that states and their evaluators cannot access information that their grantees entered through any type of report or export. In August 2016, 21APR made GPRA performance results at the state level available to states.

States did not know what the 21APR system would look like, what information would be included (or not), and how the information would be requested until the system opened in November 2015. As such, Pennsylvania and its grantees could not make alternate arrangements for collecting or reporting information. **Because of these changes, a great deal of information was not available for state evaluation that had been available in the past, including student program participation and attendance, student demographics, staffing information, center operations and activities, and full teacher survey results.** Readers should exercise extreme caution in comparing the 2014-15 state evaluation to prior or future years.

HOW TO USE THIS REPORT

The primary audiences for this report include PDE, technical assistance providers, and Pennsylvania 21st Century grantees, though the results can be useful for other groups.

The evaluation of the 2014-15 program year focused on the three performance measures outlined previously. Additionally, grantees provided implementation and

contextual data to support and explain program results. Findings and information are provided overall (all grantees combined) and for each cohort as appropriate and available. Throughout this report, the narrative explanation precedes the graphical representation of results.

Throughout this report, for ease of reading, percentages have been rounded, which may result in totals not equal to 100 percent. Additionally, in tables or graphs where “0%” appears, the reader should note that these represent values of less than 1 percent expressed as a rounded value. Instances of zero percent where the item truly represents zero instances or individuals have been removed from graphs to make them easier to read. Likewise, where blank cells appear in data tables, the value is zero.

Some graphs contained in this report include both the number of instances (in a data table) along with an illustration of the proportional relationship of those figures. This type of graph is typically used when the categories are mutually exclusive and individual category percentages equal 100 percent. Other graphs only include the percentage of instances. This type of graph is typically used when multiple categories can apply to a single item (grantees could select all items that applied). Data tables that include percentages are also used in cases where the percentage is a more accurate representation of the program or the population being examined. The type of illustration included will indicate to the reader the most appropriate way to examine the findings.

Some sections provide ranges (minimum and maximum) of results in order to demonstrate the variability of grantee programs and outcomes, as well as an average. An average, or mean, is a measure of central tendency where the result is calculated by adding two or more values together and then dividing the resulting total by the number of values included.

It is important for readers to note that not all grantees reported in all areas. In some cases, grantees were not required to report in all areas, as their applications and program operation dictated the required reporting components. In other areas, grantees may have had no students or programs to which a particular data element applied or they failed to report. The number of grantees (or centers) reporting in each area is provided to minimize confusion.

Care should be taken in making comparisons across cohorts, as each has differing populations, programs, and student counts, and grantees had different approved program applications. Further, some of each cohort’s program requirements were slightly different to accommodate changes in state priorities and federal guidance. This report is not an evaluation of individual grantees, but rather an overall examination of the programs implemented during the 2014-15 program year, which includes summer 2014 and school year 2014-15. Grantees are required to have an external local evaluator who should be providing examination of the individual grantee’s program. Grantees’ local evaluation reports are to be submitted to the state by the end of October each year.

This report includes detailed explanations of the program's implementation and outcomes as addressed throughout the findings section. In addition, this report includes sections that present information contained in findings in the context of the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) measures. The report concludes with evaluator reflections, implications, and recommendations for improvement.

It is important to remember that because of the nature of 21st Century programs, the students these programs serve, current information collection methods, and other resources available to schools, organizations, communities, and students, it is not possible to attribute student outcomes solely to this program's efforts.

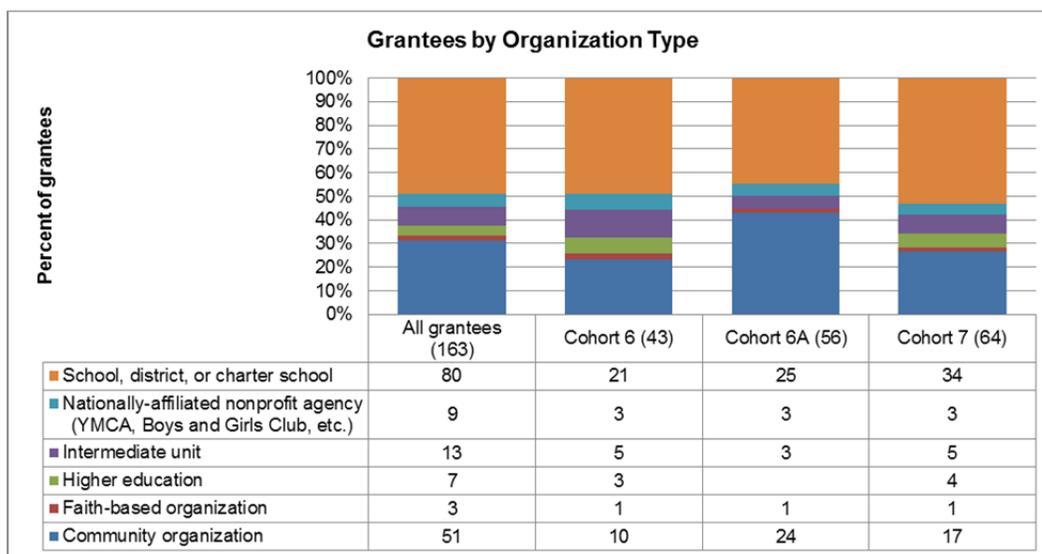
The findings provided within this report should be used to guide program management and assist PDE and the contracted technical assistance team from the Center for Schools and Communities in providing assistance to grantees in order to improve implementation and outcomes.

Findings

The program findings shared in this report include information reported by grantees and state-level program staff throughout the 2014-15 program year, which includes summer 2014 and school year 2014-15. The various reporting venues are explained in the prior section of this report.

GRANTEE CHARACTERISTICS

The 2014-15 program year included 163 grantees in three funding cycles, each called a cohort: Cohort 6 included 43 grantees, Cohort 6A included 56 grantees, and Cohort 7 included 64 grantees. Cohort 6 grantees were eligible to operate during summer 2014 through September 30, 2014 only, while Cohort 6A and Cohort 7 were eligible to operate the full program year, which included summer 2014 and school year 2014-15. Grantees were mainly schools, districts, or charter schools (49 percent) or community-based/nonprofit organizations (31 percent). This varied somewhat by cohort, being consistent for Cohort 6 and Cohort 7, but Cohort 6A was split nearly half being schools and nearly half being community organizations.



While the graph above represents grantees' organization type, this type is only indicative of the organization having fiscal and contractual responsibility for the program. Each grantee operated programming out of one or more centers (locations), which may be a different type than the grantee organization. For example, a community organization may operate its program in school buildings and a school district may operate its program in a community organization's facility. Each grantee was permitted to operate its program in whatever manner was described in its approved grant application based on the needs of the population to be served.

Specific information was not available for analysis related to center types or operation. This information had been available from the previous federal reporting system but was not available from 21APR.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

While the concept of 21st Century programs is to provide out-of-school-time programs that offer students supplemental academic and enrichment activities and there are some operational requirements, the 21st Century grant affords grantees a good deal of program design flexibility.

Grantees could operate programs during the summer of 2014, school year 2014-15, or both. Specific date ranges are not prescribed to allow for the local variance of school year start or end dates. Specific operations information was not available from the federal reporting system for the program year as it had been in the past. However, grantees were required to operate a minimum of 36 weeks during the school year, for 12-15 hours per week afterschool, unless approved to operate otherwise.

Implementation information about student and adult/family activities and staffing were collected in 21APR, but not available for analysis as they had been in the past. Student demographics, participation, and attendance were also not available because of the described changes in federal reporting and data availability.

Program Design

Program guidance included a list of allowable activities. In the PA Grantee Report, grantees indicated which program areas they addressed from a list of 15 areas outlined in Pennsylvania's program guidance. Nearly all indicated they offered math and science education activities, or STEM (98 percent), recreational activities (96 percent), and/or remedial education activities and academic enrichment learning programs (90 percent). Categories offered the least included counseling programs (21 percent of grantees), expanded library service hours (26 percent of grantees), and/or programs for limited English proficient students (28 percent of grantees). Percentages were similar across cohorts.

Grantees indicated in the PA Grantee Report strategies they used to identify, enroll, and serve students. Grantees could select from a list of strategies or share their own and they could select all strategies that applied to them. The largest portion of grantees (89 percent) used teacher or school recommendation to identify students to enroll, followed by parent referral (77 percent of grantees). Most grantees (96 percent) indicated using two or more strategies.

Identification and recruitment challenges grantees reported included parent commitment to consistent attendance (52 percent of grantees), competition with other programs (50 percent of grantees), and parent involvement and awareness (49 percent of grantees).

Competition was most pronounced for Cohort 6A, where 63 percent of grantees indicated related challenges. Seventeen percent of grantees indicated that they did not experience or were not aware of any such challenges.

Grantees were able to indicate the strategies or information they used to identify students' needs. From a list of eight options, a majority of grantees reported using teacher or school recommendation (95 percent of grantees) followed by report card grades (83 percent of grantees). Three percent of grantees indicated that they did not formally identify student needs. Results were similar across cohorts. In a related question, 74 percent of grantees indicated they used student need information to group students for small group support. As a reminder, 21st Century programs are intended to support students in identified high-needs schools. As such, it is likely safe to assume that the students in these schools, on the whole, have needs to be addressed.

Grantees reported in the PA Grantee Report on general strategies they used related to improving discipline and school attendance. School attendance and discipline were included in Pennsylvania's program guidance, and consequently the annual state reporting, but these elements were not explicitly part of federal reporting beyond teacher feedback. These strategies may represent specific activities the grantee offered or may be infused into activities that are reported in 21APR, but not explicitly addressed in that system.

To influence positive student behavior at school (and/or prevention/reduction of disciplinary incidents) and improved school attendance, more than 90 percent of grantees indicated that they used communication with schools, teachers, administrators, or parents. Less than six percent of grantees for each item indicated that no specific strategies were used or that school attendance and discipline were not a focus of their programs.

In addition to examining implementation and operations of 21st Century programs, the PA Grantee Report asked grantees to indicate how they collaborated with students' schools. Grantees collaborated in multiple ways, with all grantees selecting ongoing communication with school administrators (100 percent) followed closely by ongoing communication with school day teachers (96 percent). Many grantees (84 percent) reported that school day teachers also served as program staff.

Grantee Provision of Professional Development

All but one grantee (162 of 163) indicated that they offered professional development to staff. This professional development most typically took the form of staff orientations (88 percent of grantees) or state or national afterschool conferences (82 percent grantees) among other topics. Grantee contracts require them to participate in state and/or national professional development opportunities.

When asked to indicate how professional development learning, information, and resources were shared with other program staff, staff meetings and email

communication were selected most (96 percent of grantees each), followed by informal conversations (91 percent). Cohort-specific results were similar.

State Provision of Professional Development

PDE and the Center for Schools and Communities (PDE's contractor for 21st Century technical assistance) offered several professional development opportunities for grantees at the state level. These opportunities occurred through four venues: the Promising Practices – Proven Strategies Extra Learning Opportunities Conference, which occurs annually in March; the annual 21st Century Grantees Meeting, held immediately before the Extra Learning Opportunities Conference; three regional trainings, one day each in western, central, and eastern Pennsylvania; and seven webinars. Content of the grantee meeting and regional trainings included grant and compliance information as well as implementation strategies. The Extra Learning Opportunities Conference was not only 21st Century grantees – the conference was open to out-of-school-time providers – and it covered various topics related to the implementation of programs during nonschool hours. The Center for Schools and Communities was primarily responsible for state-level training opportunities and submitted a full report about trainings to PDE. As such, only an overview is included here.

Based on attendance data provided by the Center for Schools and Communities, 265 21st Century staff attended the mandatory annual grantee meeting held before the Extra Learning Opportunities Conference.

The Extra Learning Opportunities Conference, held over three days in Harrisburg, was a major professional development opportunity for 21st Century grantees. Although it was open to participants beyond 21st Century programs, the conference focused on out-of-school-time programs, strategies, and resources, making it an especially relevant learning opportunity for grantees. Based on data provided by the Center for Schools and Communities, which managed the event, 461 individuals attended this conference, though grantee-specific counts were not available.

Regional trainings occurred in Pittsburgh, Harrisburg, and Philadelphia. Attendance included 78 individuals for the Pittsburgh location, 70 for the regional training in Harrisburg, and 155 for the regional session held in Philadelphia. Counts of grantees represented were not available.

Seven webinars occurred during 2014-15 covering topics relevant to out-of-school-time programs. Members of the state 21st Century team or various experts and contributors from outside the program presented the webinars. These webinar topics, timing, and participation counts are shown in the following table.

Topic	Month/Year	Participants
Preparing for 21 st Century Evaluation and PPICS Reporting	August 2014	<i>Not available</i>
Cohort 7 Mandatory Grantees' Orientation	December 2014	188
21st Century Professional Development Program Plan: Identifying Needs, Completion and Submission of the Form and Ensuring Application	January 2015	66
Make Learning Fun for the Whole Family!	February 2015	48
Preparing for Evaluation and Reporting on Your 21st Century Program	March 2015	86
Building Student Vocabulary in 21st CCLC Programs: Bigger, Better, Faster!	April 2015	32
Implementing Project Based STEM Learning With Y4Y	May 2015	46

An additional training opportunity - Mindset, Grit and Optimism: Promoting Skills that Lead to Academic Tenacity - was offered, but the target audience was not 21st Century grantees; however, two 21st Century program staff participated.

Adult Family Member Activities

Programs were required to serve parents and family members of participating students. In the PA Grantee Report, grantees could indicate the types of parent/family activities offered from a list of options that included adult English as a Second Language services; adult education opportunities and/or GED classes; career/job training; computer/ technology training; cultural events; family literacy nights; health and wellness; open house events; parent/center staff meetings; parenting skills classes; parent training on how to help their children with schoolwork; parent training on post-secondary options and planning; parent reinforcement of the importance of school and education; parent volunteering at the program; and structured family recreation. Grantees could describe other activity types as well. Grantees could select all activity types that applied to their program for 2014-15. A majority of grantees selected open house activities (90 percent of grantees), followed distantly by cultural events (50 percent of grantees) and parent reinforcement of the importance of school and education (50 percent of grantees), with other options selected to a lesser extent. Eight grantees indicated only having open house events. Five grantees indicated not having any such activities, but four of these were Cohort 6 grantees that only operated brief programs between summer 2014 and the end of the Cohort 6 contract period (September 30, 2015). One grantee reporting no such activities was a Cohort 7 grantee.

In the PA Grantee Report, grantees shared how they communicate with parents, students, and the community. Grantees most often indicated open house events and family nights (93 percent grantees), advisory board meetings (93 percent of grantees), and/or fliers, promotional materials, or newsletters (93 percent of grantees) in addition to a variety of other formal and informal methods.

MONITORING

Each year, a selection of grantees receives a monitoring site visit to examine program implementation to determine compliance with contract and program requirements, identify areas of strength and need, and provide technical assistance. During 2014-15, 28 Cohort 6A grantees were to receive monitoring visits. PDE program officers or the PDE program supervisor conducted each monitoring visit. Monitors visited one or more program sites, reviewed documentation, and interviewed stakeholders – administrators, staff, parents, students, partners, and/or community members. There was a process for scheduling monitoring site visits that took into account a grantee’s experience. Grantees that had never had a 21st Century grant and those who had concerns were to be monitored earlier in their grant cycle than experienced grantees that had no identified concerns. PDE provided evaluators with a monitoring site visit report for 18 of the 28 grantees monitored during 2014-15. Despite several follow-ups, the remaining reports were not available to evaluators.

The monitoring visit and subsequent report addressed approximately 70 compliance items that could be rated as “exemplary,” “meeting requirements,” “in development,” and “noncompliant.” A grantee’s receipt of an “in development” or “noncompliant” rating triggers the completion of a *Corrective Action Plan* and the grantee taking steps to address the program element. A few items had a “not applicable” compliance option because there were some requirements that differed among the cohorts or based on grantee circumstances.

At the time of their monitoring visit, most grantees were meeting or exceeding all the minimum program requirements and quality components. Nine of the 18 grantees for which monitoring report data were available were rated exemplary, meeting requirements, or not applicable for all compliance items. All remaining grantees were meeting or exceeding 90 percent or more of the compliance items that applied to them.

Four grantees received one or more exemplary ratings, meaning they were going beyond the minimum requirements with their program. Two grantees were rated exemplary for meeting or exceeding the 85 percent attendance threshold. Other exemplary ratings were indicated for implementation of STEM programming, involving daytime teachers in progress reporting and addressing student needs, nutrition education, having appropriate security, formal procedures and communications for student pick up, afterschool program attendance policies, and for providing other recommended activities for students.

Nine grantees received one or more in development or noncompliant ratings. Program areas where grantees appeared to be struggling the most, based on in development or noncompliant ratings, included various aspects of holding advisory board meetings, open house events or meetings, meeting proposed student attendance targets, parental involvement, program evaluation, partnerships, and program sustainability planning. Other areas rated in development or noncompliant with lesser frequency were meeting hours and weeks program operations targets, afterschool office space, technology

integration, communication of program goals and requirements to stakeholders, submission of program revisions, submission of expenditure reports and related documentation, facility requirements, and processes for student pick up.

Monitors provided a great deal of comments on individual indicators and in summary. Many comments described program components to provide further detail on program operation. Some comments indicated positive program elements and some indicated areas that could be improved. Individual reports are issued to grantees and are accessible by PDE staff and technical assistance providers in order to provide technical assistance and plan for training and support.

STUDENT OUTCOMES

Grantees had a variety of ways to report student outcomes. The PA Grantee Report included student outcomes on local reading and math assessments, school attendance, and school discipline for grantees identifying such measures in their applications. All grantees operating during the school year were required to report reading and math report card grade results and teacher survey results in the 21APR system. However, report card and teacher survey results were not available from 21APR for analysis, except at a combined state level.

Summer-only grantees, in this case Cohort 6 grantees, were not required to report student outcomes data, though some chose to do so.

Academics

Results provided in this section address the program performance measure: “Increasing percentages of students regularly participating in the program will meet or exceed state and local academic achievement standards in reading and math.”

Some grantees shared that they experienced difficulty related to collecting, managing, or analyzing student academic data. The most common challenges included the state assessment availability timeline (30 percent of grantees), completion of the teacher survey (25 percent of grantees), and collecting data from multiple schools/districts (20 percent of grantees). Thirty-seven percent of grantees indicated that they did not experience or were not aware of any challenges.

State Reading and Math Assessments

Each year, students in certain grades take one of Pennsylvania’s literacy-related state assessments (PSSA, PASA, or Keystone Exam). The reading PSSA is administered to the most students and is given in March or April³ in grades three to eight. Students in 11th grade take the literature Keystone Exam. The PASA is Pennsylvania’s alternative state assessment and is administered in grades three to eight and 11 for students with

³ Writing and science PSSA data is not included in state or federal 21st Century reporting at this time.
Pennsylvania 21st Century Community Learning Centers
2014-15 State Evaluation Report
Originated November 3, 2016

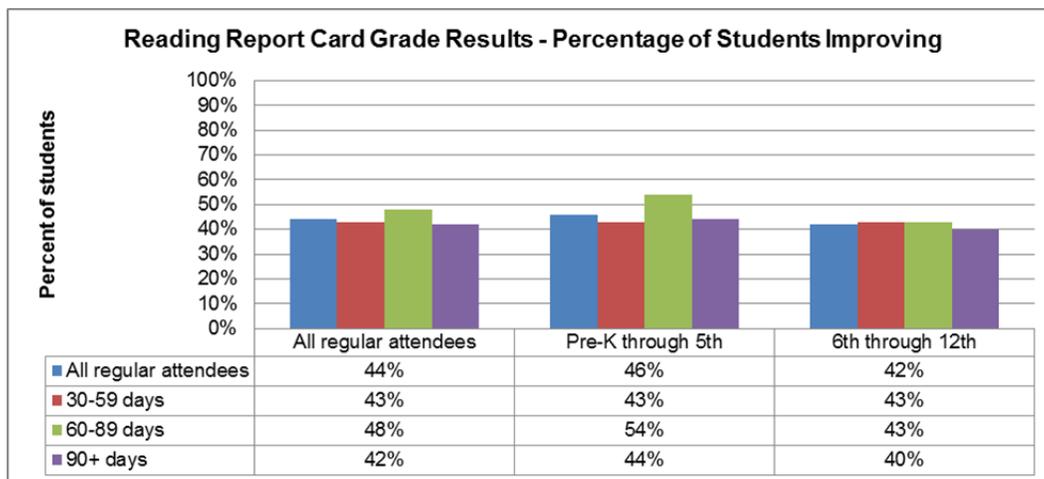
cognitive disabilities. The Keystone Exam and PASA are aligned to the PSSA and use the same performance levels (below basic, basic, proficient, or advanced).

State assessment growth from the prior year to the program year has historically been part of this evaluation. However, changes to the 2015 PSSA in terms of its rigor and scoring rubric make a comparison from 2013-14 to 2014-15 not possible. Pennsylvania received a waiver from using 2014-15 results for accountability from the United States Department of Education. Additionally, because of changes to the federal reporting system, current year “snapshot” results were not available for 2014-15. Given these two circumstances, no state assessment results are included in this year’s 21st Century state evaluation report. State assessment results reporting is expected to resume in 2015-16.

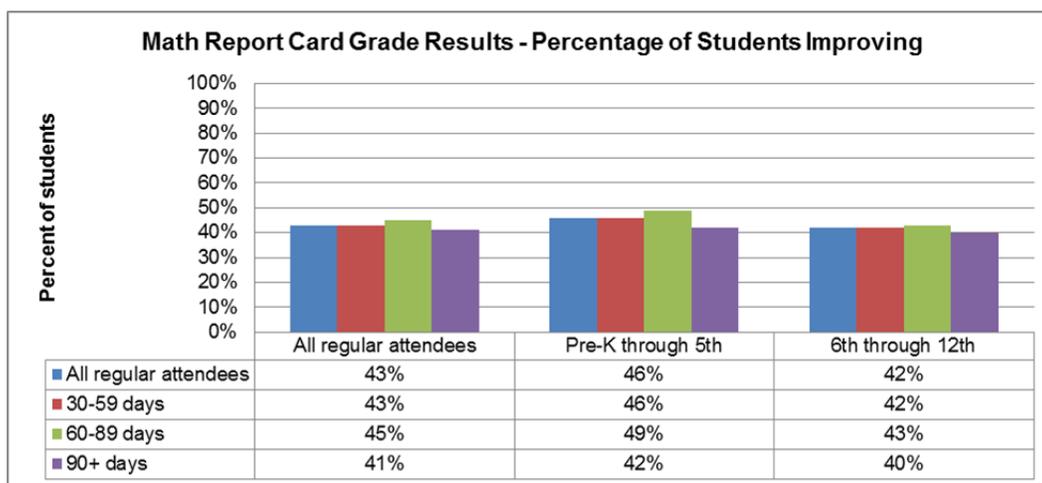
Reading and Math Report Card Results

Overall improvement percentage information was available from the federal 21APR system. Only the percentage of students improving was available; student counts or breakdowns of the other outcome classifications were not available. Results were provided overall for all regular attendees by content area, by program attendance category, and by grade band.

For reading report card results, 44 percent of all regular attendees reported improved from fall to spring according to grantee-reported data. This percentage was slightly higher for younger students. Students attending the program 60-89 days showed the greatest improvement percentage. Younger students’ improvement percentages overall and for each category were slightly better than those of middle and high school students.



Math report card grade improvement percentages and trends were similar to those for reading. Overall, 43 percent of all regular attendees improved their math report card grade from fall to spring. Students attending 60-89 days had the highest improvement percentage. This trend was consistent for the pre-K through fifth grade group, but with slightly higher improvement percentages.



Local Reading Results

The PA Grantee Report collected local academic assessment results from grantees that indicated using local assessments in their grant application. Grantees also had the option to include report card grade results from analysis that differed from than the way report card grades were analyzed for federal reporting. Grantees used a variety of assessment instruments or methods, the most popular being Study Island and 4Sight Benchmark Assessments, though evaluators noted an increase in the variety of assessments used this year over prior years.

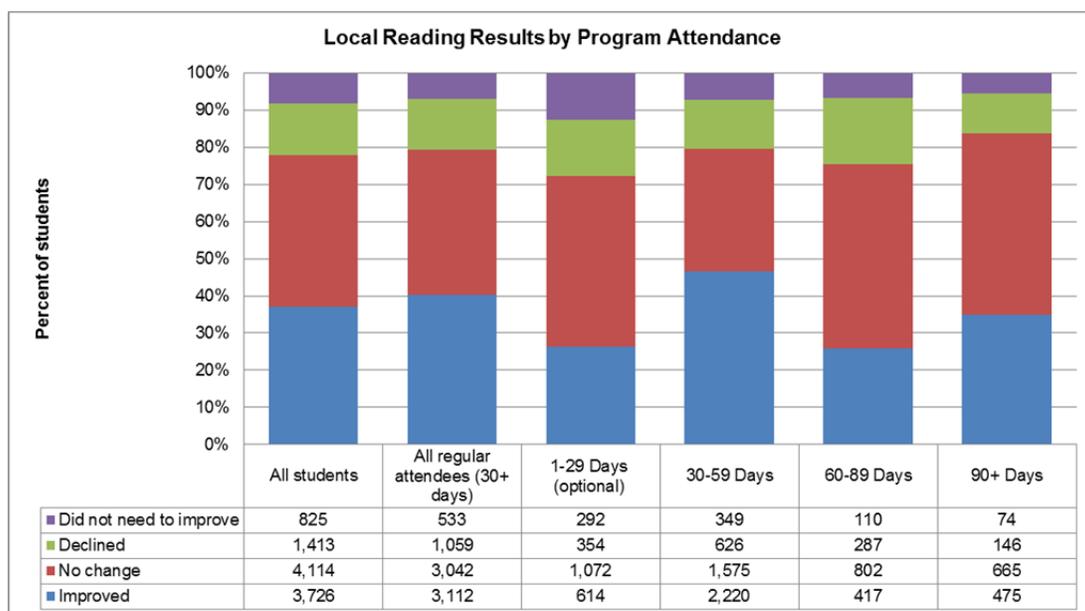
Grantees reported aggregate results, not individual student results. Since each grantee established performance indicators in slightly different ways and using various methods and instruments, grantees reported results in the general change categories, having freedom to define how change would be calculated.⁴ Grantees reported in the PA Grantee Report how they defined improvement, decline, no change, and no need to improve.

Local reading results were expected for those grantees indicating such examination in their grant application and 53 grantees reported reading results (33 percent of 163 grantees), which includes five Cohort 6 grantees, 22 Cohort 6A grantees, and 26 Cohort 7 grantees. These grantees reported local reading results for a total of 10,078 students, of which 37 percent showed improvement according to grantee-reported information,

⁴ Different assessments typically have different recommended analysis methods. In training, evaluators reinforce with grantees that they should consult their assessment developer's directions as to how data should be analyzed.

followed by 41 percent of students who showed no change or maintained their level, 14 percent who declined, and 8 percent who did not need to improve.

Reporting information on students who were not regular attendees (those attending the program for one to 29 days) was optional, and should be compared to other groups with caution. However, these results show that regular attendees – those attending the program a minimum of 30 days over the program year – outperformed non-regular attendees 41 percent improving compared to 26 percent improving, though results also show that students attending the least were more likely to not need to improve. Results by program attendance category indicate the greatest percentage improving in the 30-59 days category (47 percent improved), though the 90+ days category had the smallest percentage declining (11 percent).



Cohort-level results show Cohort 6A grantees having the highest percentage of students improving, 54 percent of 3,424 regular attendees, compared to 30 percent of Cohort 7 students improving (of 3,938 regular attendees).⁵

For grantee success in influencing positive outcomes as measured by local reading assessments, the number of regularly attending students for whom results were reported and need was indicated was compared to the number of regularly attending students reported as improving on local reading measures. A total of 51 grantees reported results for regular attendees who needed to improve in reading. The greatest number of these grantees (20) had results indicating between 26 and 50 percent of these regular attendees improved on local reading measures. The next-largest group (14) reported results indicating that 25 percent or less improved.

⁵ Cohort-specific analysis results were not included for Cohort 6 because the short duration of programs (contracts ended) may skew the findings.

Percent of Regular Attendees Improving (excluding Did Not Need to Improve)	Number of Grantees
76% to 100% of regular attendees improved	9
51% to 75% of regular attendees improved	7
26% to 50% of regular attendees improved	20
0% to 25% of regular attendees improved	14
No regular attendees improved	1
Total	51

Local Math Results

The PA Grantee Report collected local academic assessment results from grantees that indicated using certain assessments in their applications. Grantees also had the opportunity to include report card grade results from analysis done differently than the way report card grades were analyzed for the Annual Performance Report. Grantees used a variety of assessment instruments or methods, the most popular being Study Island and 4Sight Benchmark Assessments, though evaluators noted more diversity in assessments than in previous years.

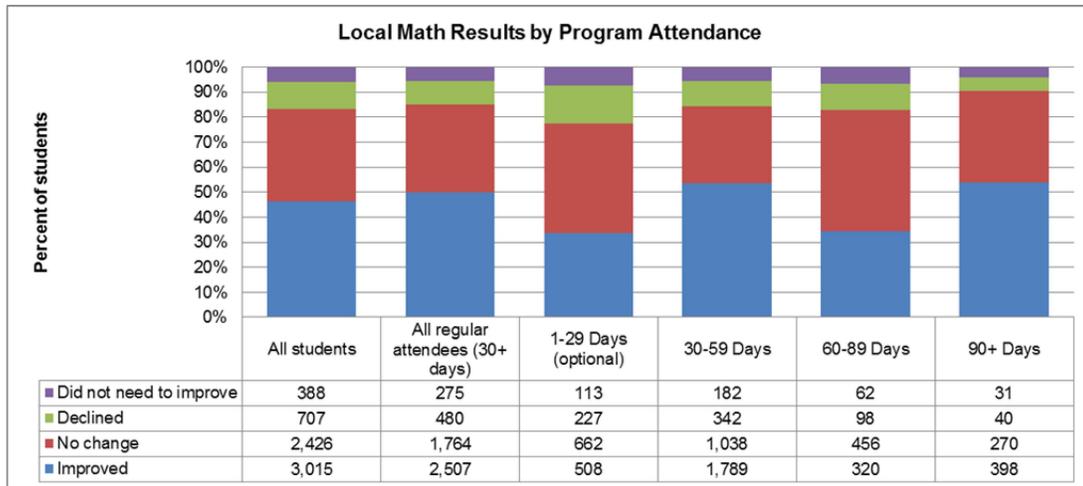
Grantees reported aggregate results, not individual student results. Since each grantee established performance indicators in slightly different ways and using various methods and instruments, grantees were allowed to report results in the general change categories, having freedom to define how change would be calculated.⁶ Grantees were to explain how they defined improvement, decline, and no change/no need to improve.

Local math assessment results were expected for those grantees indicating such examination in their grant application, and 43 grantees (26 percent of grantees) reported results, which included three Cohort 6 grantees, 20 Cohort 6A grantees, and 20 Cohort 7 grantees.

Grantees reported local math results for 6,536 students, of which 46 percent improved, 37 percent showed no change or maintained their level, 11 percent declined, and six percent did not need to improve.

Reporting information on students who were not regular attendees (those attending the program for one to 29 days) was optional, and as such many grantees did not report on these students. However, regular attendees outperformed students attending 1-29 days with 50 percent to 34 percent improving, though non-regular attendees were more likely to not have a need to improve in math. Increased program attendance is furthermore shown as a positive influence on outcomes, as the percentage of students improving is highest for the 90+ days of program attendance category and this attendance category also has the smallest percentage of students declining.

⁶ Different assessments typically have different analysis methods. In training, evaluators reinforce with grantees that they should consult their assessment developer's guidance or directions as to how data should be analyzed.



Cohort 6A results were slightly better than Cohort 7, with Cohort 6A having 58 percent (of 2,764) of regular attendees improve, while Cohort 7 had 42 percent (of 2,022) of regular attendees improve. Decline and did not need to improve percentages were the same for both Cohort 6A and Cohort 7.

For grantee success in influencing positive outcomes as measured by local math assessments, the number of regularly attending students for whom results were reported and need was indicated was compared to the number of regularly attending students reported as improving on local math measures. A total of 42 grantees reported results for regular attendees who needed to improve in math. The greatest number of these grantees (15) had results indicating between 26 and 50 percent of these regular attendees improved on local math measures. The next-largest group (12) reports results indicating that 25 percent or less improved.

Percent of Regular Attendees Improving (excluding Did Not Need to Improve)	Number of Grantees
76% to 100% of regular attendees improved	8
51% to 75% of regular attendees improved	8
26% to 50% of regular attendees improved	15
0% to 25% of regular attendees improved	10
No regular attendees improved	1
Total	42

Behavior

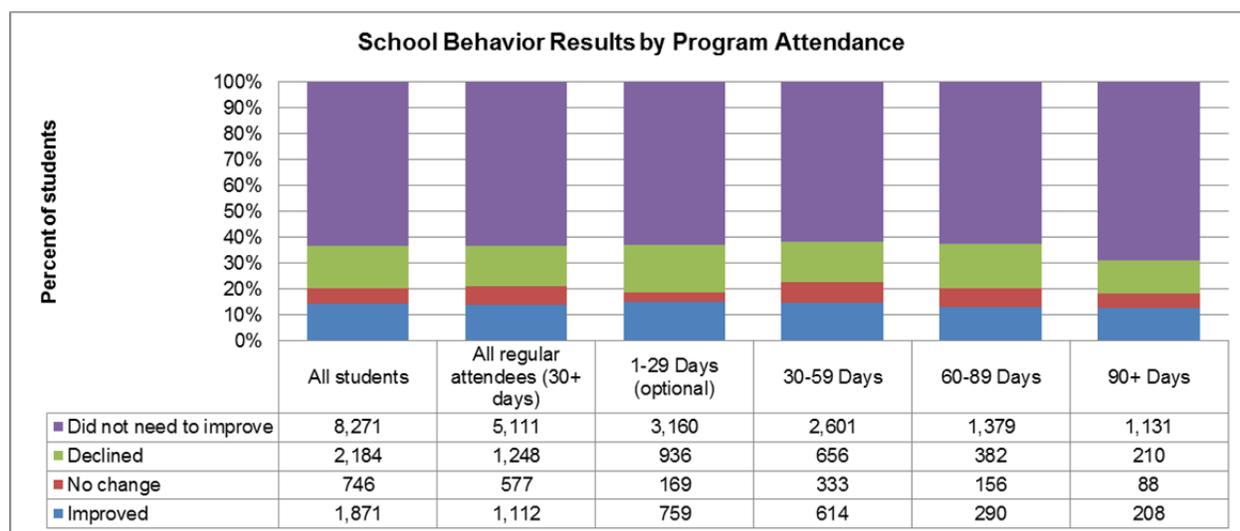
Results provided in this section address the following program performance measures:

1. Participants in 21st Century programs will demonstrate educational and social benefits and exhibit positive behavioral changes and
2. Students participating in the program will show improvement in the performance measures of school attendance, classroom performance, and reduced disciplinary referrals.

In the PA Grantee Report, grantees shared their challenges related to collecting and using attendance and behavior data; 52 percent of grantees indicated that they did not experience or were not aware of any challenges. Grantees that reported experiencing challenges most often indicated teachers not completing the teacher survey (22 percent of grantees), collecting data from multiple schools or districts (20 percent of grantees), and inconsistency in how schools track such data (15 percent of grantees), among others.

Seventy-three grantees (nine Cohort 6, 34 Cohort 6A, 30 Cohort 7) reported school behavior/discipline outcomes. Grantees reported aggregate results for students, not individual student data. Each grantee established performance indicators in slightly different ways, so grantees were asked to report results in the general change categories, having freedom to define how change would be calculated. Grantees shared how they defined change and used a variety of measures and degrees of change to place students in a change category.

Overall results show that more than half of the more than 15,000 students reported (63 percent) did not need to improve in the area of school behavior and discipline. Of remaining students, the largest portion declined (17 percent), followed by those who improved (14 percent) and finally, those who showed no change (six percent). While the differences in numbers between regular attendees and non-regular attendees were considerable the results are very similar between the two groups. Furthermore, results by program attendance category are also similar across groups, though the portion of students who needed to improve decreases with greater program attendance, indicating that students with greater need related to behavior and discipline tended to attend the program less often.



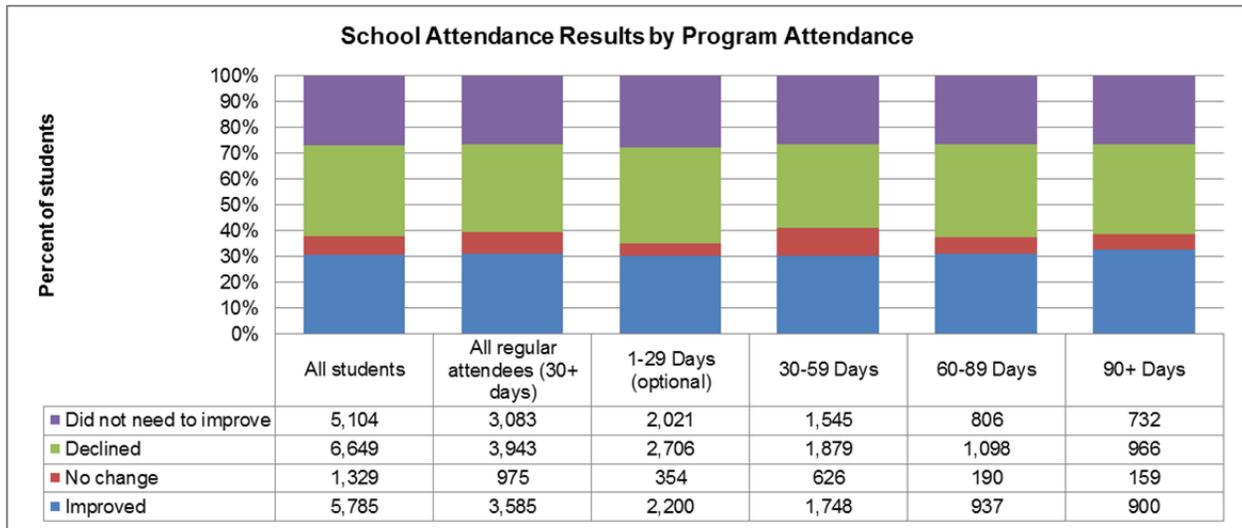
Results by cohort were also similar to each other and the aggregated state results, overall, by regular attendee status, and by program attendance category.

For grantee success in influencing positive school behavior outcomes, the number of regularly attending students for whom results were reported and need was indicated was compared to the number of regularly attending students reported as improving. A total of 69 grantees reported results for regular attendees who needed to improve their behavior. The greatest number of these grantees (48) had results indicating 25 percent or less of these regular attendees improved their behavior. The next-largest group (10) reported results indicating that 26 to 50 percent improved.

Percent of Regular Attendees Improving (excluding Did Not Need to Improve)	Number of Grantees
76% to 100% of regular attendees improved	2
51% to 75% of regular attendees improved	3
26% to 50% of regular attendees improved	10
0% to 25% of regular attendees improved	48
No regular attendees improved	6
Total	69

Ninety-three grantees (nine Cohort 6, 39 Cohort 6A, 45 Cohort 7) reported school attendance outcomes. Grantees reported aggregate results for students, not individual student data. Each grantee established performance indicators in slightly different ways, so they were allowed to report results in the general change categories, having freedom to define how change would be calculated.

Grantees reported school attendance results for 18,867 students and overall results show that 31 percent of all students included in analysis improved their school attendance based on grantee-defined change. The largest group, at 35 percent, declined; 27 percent of students did not need to improve and seven percent showed no change in their school attendance. Breaking these results down for regular attendees and students who did not attend regularly, regular attendees had only a one percentage point greater portion of students improving than non-regular attendees. However, regular attendees had a lower percentage of students declining (34 percent) compared to non-regular attendees (37 percent), a higher percentage of those showing no change (eight percent compared to five percent), and a lower percentage of students who did not need to improve (27 percent compared to 28 percent of non-regular attendees). Results by program attendance category indicated that students attending in the 90+ days category were most likely to improve (33 percent compared to 30 or 31 percent in the other categories).



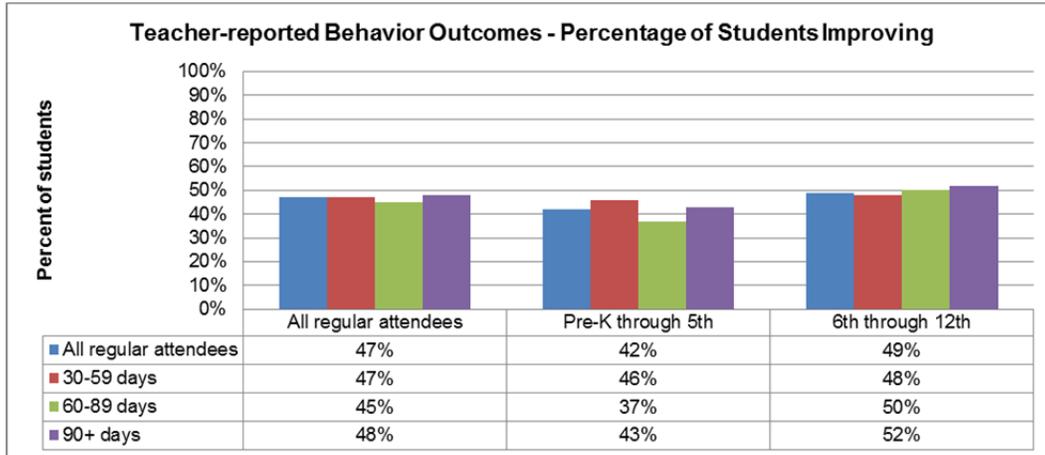
Cohort 7 had the largest percentage of students improving (34 percent compared to 28 percent for Cohort 6A and 24 percent for Cohort 6), with a similar trend for regular attendees. Cohort results by program attendance categories were similar to each other and the state, with the greatest improvement percentages in the 90+ days category.

For grantee success in influencing positive school attendance outcomes, the number of regularly attending students for whom results were reported and need was indicated was compared to the number of regularly attending students reported as improving. A total of 90 grantees reported results for regular attendees who needed to improve their school attendance. The greatest number of these grantees (45) had results indicating between 26 percent and 50 percent of these regular attendees improved their school attendance. The next-largest group (28) reported results indicating that 51 to 75 percent improved.

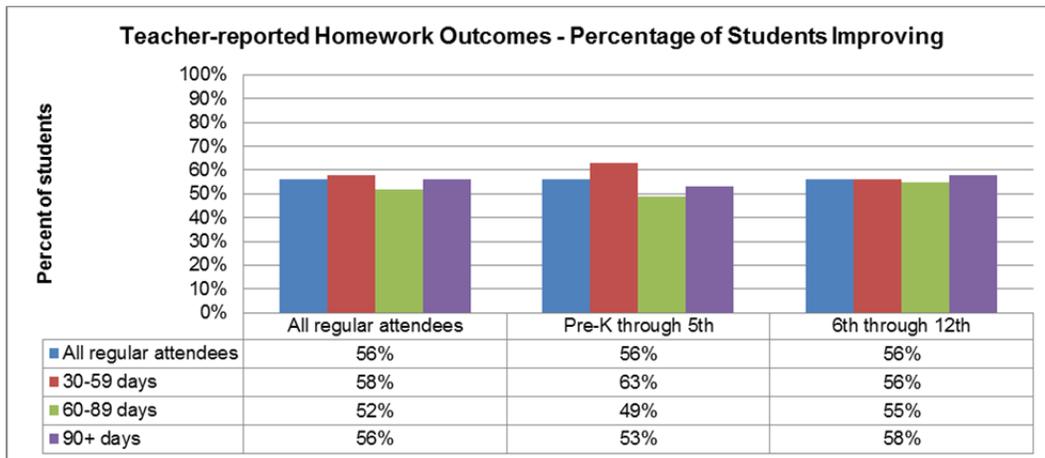
Percent of Regular Attendees Improving (excluding Did Not Need to Improve)	Number of Grantees
76% to 100% of regular attendees improved	4
51% to 75% of regular attendees improved	28
26% to 50% of regular attendees improved	45
0% to 25% of regular attendees improved	10
No regular attendees improved	3
Total	90

Overall teacher-reported behavior improvement outcomes were available from the federal 21APR system. While counts of students included in results were not available, the 21APR system provided percentages of students improving on the element of teacher-reported behavior overall, by grade band, and by attendance category. Overall, 47 percent of all regular attendees reported in this area improved in the area of teacher-reported behavior, with a slightly higher percentage for students in the 90+ days attendance category. Middle and high school students had slightly higher improvement

percentages than elementary students, with the greatest improvement percentage at the greatest program attendance level.



Improvement percentages were slightly higher for teacher-reported improvement in homework; 56 percent of all regular attendees reported in this area improved according to 21APR reports. In this case, the highest improvement percentage was for the 30-59 days category, though the difference between categories was small. Results by grade band were similar to the overall and each other, though pre-K through fifth grade students attending 30-59 days had the highest overall improvement percentage.



Credit Recovery

Credit recovery was a program focus area for the Cohort 6A funding cycle and grantees in other cohorts also offered credit recovery options for students needing to recover credits or courses. A total of 93 grantees (12 Cohort 6 grantees, 38 Cohort 6A grantees, and 43 Cohort 7 grantees) reported on credit recovery outcomes for 2014-15.

These grantees reported that a total of 2,702 students participated in credit recovery activities during this program year, with 72 percent being from Cohort 6A. Of these students, 74 percent recovered one or more courses or credits (69 percent Cohort 6, 75 percent Cohort 6A, 75 percent Cohort 7).

	Number of students recovering courses		
	Literacy courses	Math courses	Other courses
Recovered one course	893	881	799
Recovered two courses	88	39	121
Recovered three courses	29	10	36
Recovered four courses	16	--	4
Recovered five or more courses	--	--	1
Total	1,026	930	961

Grantees reported that approximately half of credit recovery students attended the program for fewer than 30 days, though Cohort 7 credit recovery students were more likely to attend 30 or more days.

STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

The PA Grantee Report provided grantees with an opportunity to share stakeholder satisfaction and feedback. For consistency, grantees were asked to report information by level of satisfaction for each of the indicators provided. Reporting stakeholder feedback was an optional reporting category for grantees, though many took advantage of the opportunity. Grantees reported aggregate numbers of stakeholders reporting in each provided component, not individual survey or feedback data.

Because a specific form was not required, some grantees reported feedback findings from stakeholders in narrative or other forms in the PA Grantee Report because their results did not closely align with the reporting fields provided in the report. These grantees' results are not included in this report, but evaluators reviewed them in the course of state analysis.

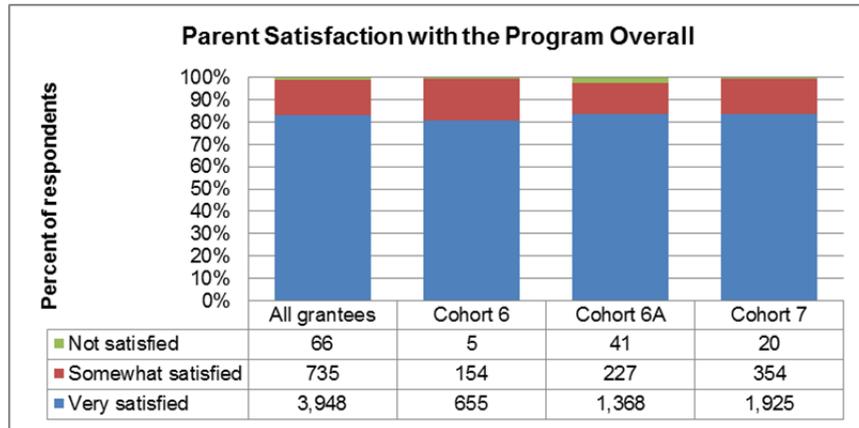
Parents

Grantees reported aggregate counts of parents responding in each satisfaction category. While a template was available to them, grantees had the freedom to design their own instruments, so the graphs that follow may include different parents. In other words, results illustrated in one graph may include different parents than those whose feedback is illustrated in another graph. While it is possible that different parents' feedback is included in each graph, it is still likely that there is overlap in the respondents.

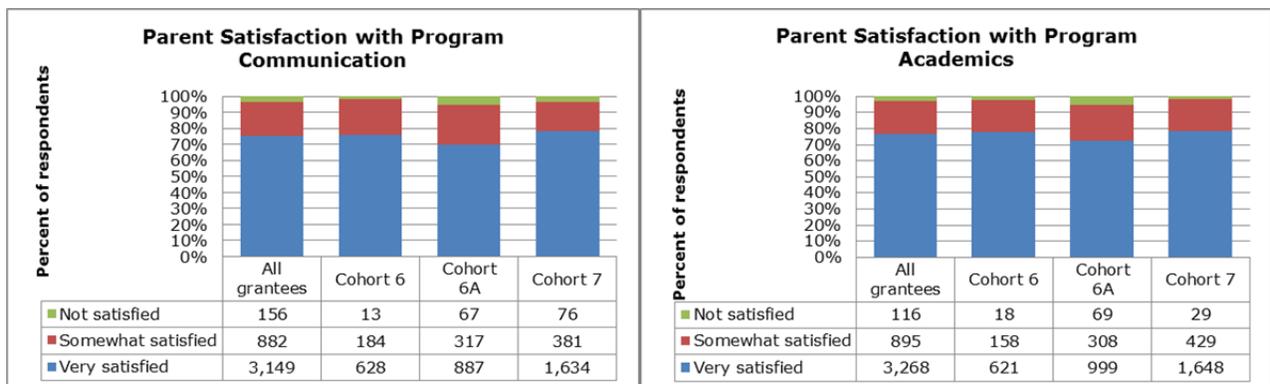
A total of 81 grantees reported parent feedback results (50 percent of all grantees) in one or more of the state-provided categories. Stakeholder feedback reporting was

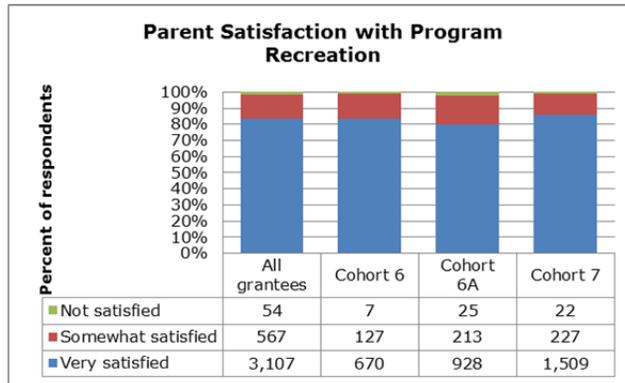
optional; additional grantees may collect parent feedback and grantees reporting feedback may collect feedback beyond what they reported in their PA Grantee Report.

In terms of overall satisfaction, 83 percent of 4,749 parents reported they were “very satisfied” with the program, 15 percent were “somewhat satisfied,” and one percent were “not satisfied.” Percentages were similar across cohorts. Readers should note that the numbers of parents reported for Cohort 6 programs are considerably smaller than the other cohorts, as these grants only operated a portion of the year; their contracts ended September 30, 2014.

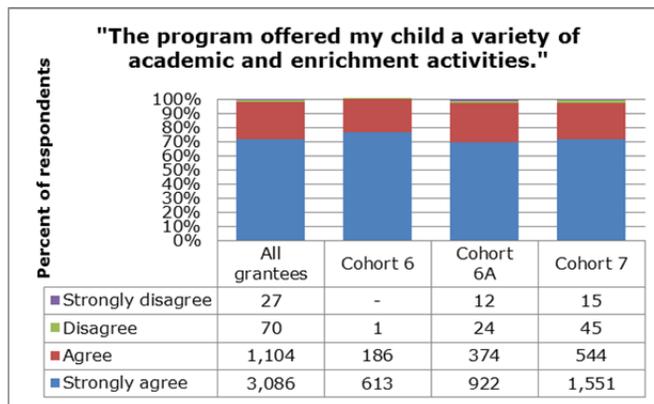


Grantees reported parent satisfaction results related to academics. Of the 4,279 parents reported for academics, 76 percent were “very satisfied,” 21 percent were “somewhat satisfied,” and three percent were “not satisfied.” Results were similar for communication, though slightly fewer parents were reported for this item (4,187): 75 percent indicated they were “very satisfied,” 21 percent were “somewhat satisfied,” and 4 percent were “not satisfied.” Parents results were slightly more positive for recreation (83 percent “very satisfied”), though fewer parents were reported than the prior two categories (3,728).

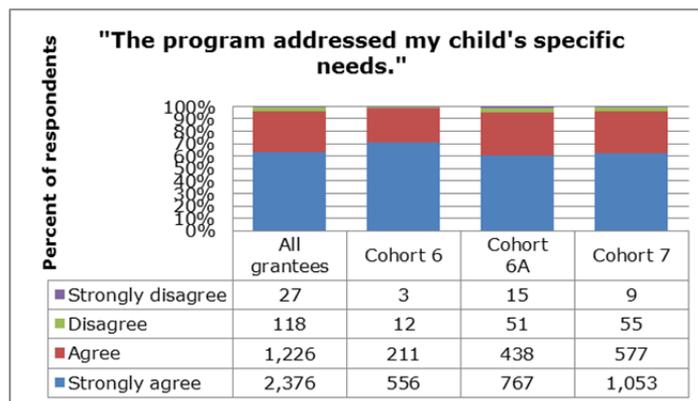




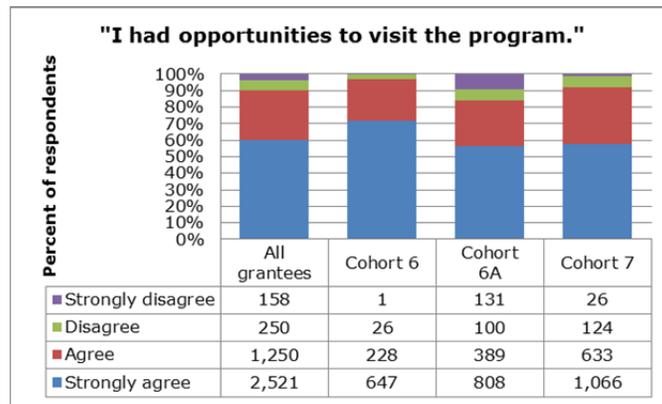
More than 4,200 parents were reported related to their agreement with the statement, “The program offered my child a variety of academic and enrichment activities,” with 72 percent of respondents being reported in the “strongly agree” response category, 26 percent were reported under “agree,” and two percent being reported within the two “disagree” categories.



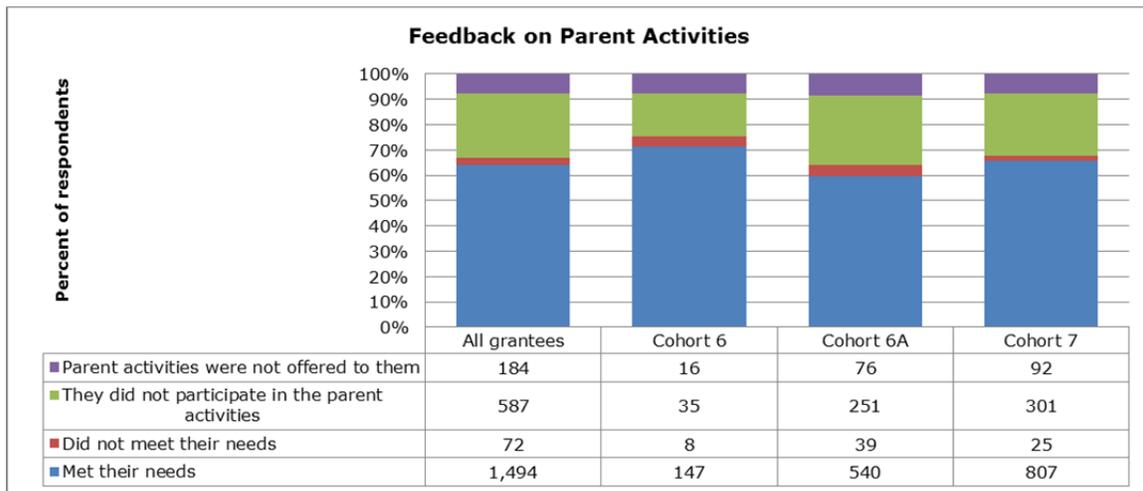
Ninety-six percent of parents were reported as agreeing with the statement related to the program addressing their child’s specific needs, with “strongly agree” responses outnumbering “agree” responses.



Similarly, 90 percent were reported as agreeing that they had opportunities to visit the program, with “strongly agree” responses outnumbering “agree” responses. Ten percent disagreed that they had opportunities to visit the program.



Grantees also had the opportunity to report parent feedback on parent activities. Fewer parents were reported for this item (2,337 parents) compared to the other items in the section. However, the majority of respondents who participated indicated that the parent activities the program offered met their needs.

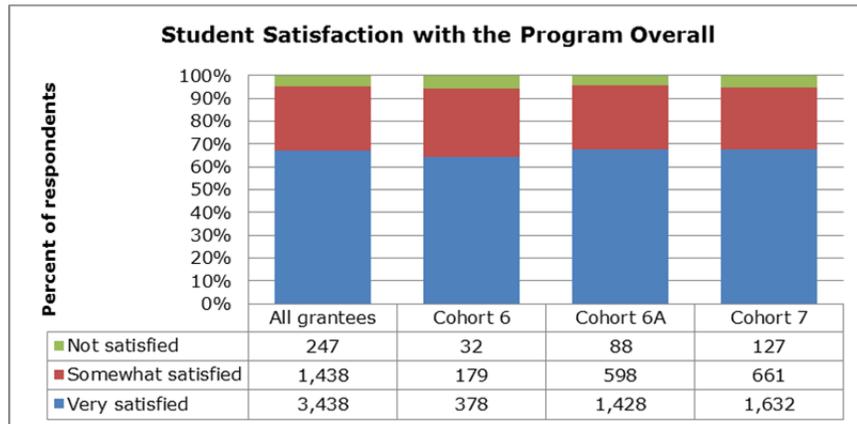


Students

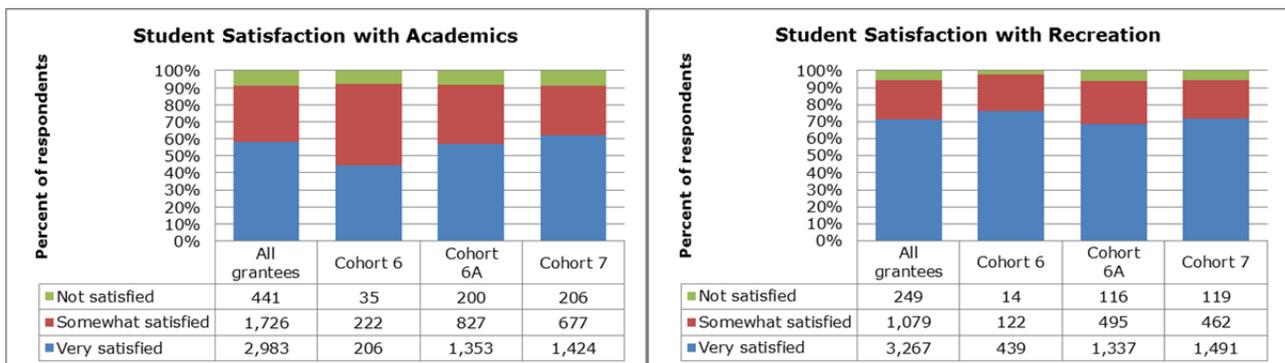
Grantees also had the option to report student feedback with reporting options like those of parents. Grantees reported aggregate counts of students responding in each satisfaction category. The student feedback reporting component was optional and grantees had the freedom to design their own instruments, so the graphs that follow may include different students. In other words, the student feedback illustrated in one graph may include different students than students' whose feedback is illustrated in another graph, though it is likely that there is some overlap in the respondents. A total

of 59 grantees (36 percent of grantees) reported student feedback in one or more areas and these grantees reported feedback for between 4,500 and 5,200 students per area.

For overall satisfaction, 95 percent of students for whom data was reported indicated they were “very satisfied” (67 percent) or “somewhat satisfied” (28 percent). Five percent of respondents overall were reported as being “not satisfied.”



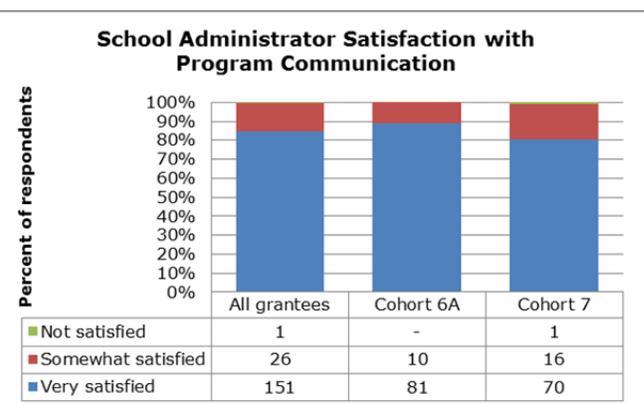
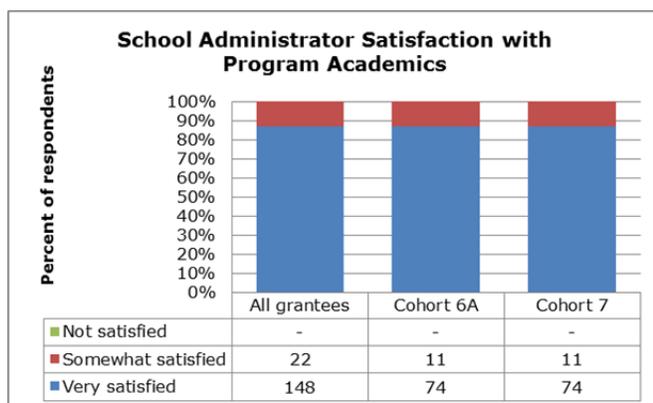
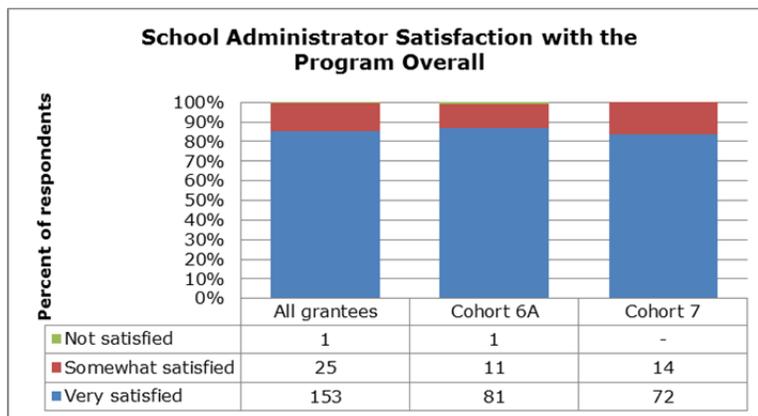
Grantees could also report student satisfaction results related to the academics and recreation the program provided. Results for these two items were similar to overall satisfaction, with 90 to 95 percent of respondents indicating they were “somewhat satisfied” or “very satisfied” with academics and/or recreation, though students tended to be slightly less positive about their satisfaction with the program’s academics. However, feedback related to why students were less satisfied with academics was not collected at the state level.



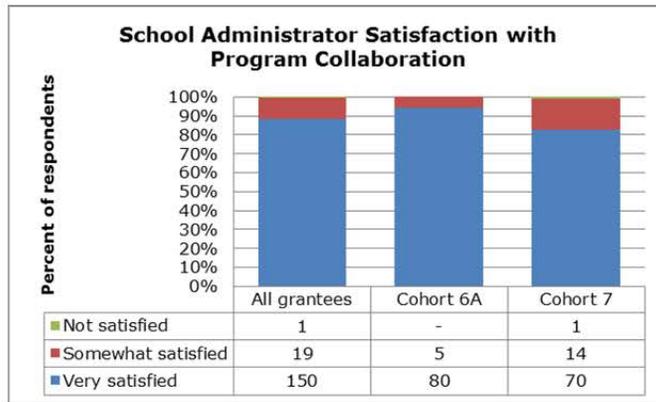
School Administrators

Like other feedback reporting in the PA Grantee Report, district administrator feedback was an optional reporting category and grantees reported aggregate counts of respondents. It appears that the results within the three areas are likely the same respondents, as evidenced by the similar respondent counts and grantees included. A total of 48 Cohort 6A and Cohort 7 grantees reported school administrator feedback results using the categories in the PA Grantee Report.⁷ Results were reported for between 170 and 179 individuals in each reporting area.

For each of the reporting elements – overall satisfaction, academics, collaboration, and communication – most respondents (85-88 percent) indicated that they were “very satisfied” with the program. Small percentages (one percent or less) reported that they were “not satisfied.” The balance was “somewhat satisfied.”



⁷ Cohort 6 grantees are not included in school administrator feedback reporting as most grants only included summer programming for this report.



2014-15 Government Performance and Results Act

The federal 21st Century program established performance objectives as part of the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA). The 21APR federal reporting system, new for 2014-15, made summary, state-level GPRA results available. While GPRA performance (percentage of students achieving the objective) was available to states, no clarifying information was available to help contextualize these findings, such as the number of students included in analysis, or how the balance of students performed. As such, these results should be interpreted with caution. The results provided here include regularly attending students having data reported in the 21APR spring term reporting window.

The indicators addressed here are related to and could be addressed within Pennsylvania's three performance measures:

1. Participants in 21st Century programs will demonstrate educational and social benefits and exhibit positive behavioral changes.
2. Increasing percentages of students regularly participating in the program will meet or exceed state and local academic achievement standards in reading and math.
3. Students participating in the program will show improvement in the performance measures of school attendance, classroom performance, and reduced disciplinary referrals.

Objective 1: Participants in 21st Century Community Learning Center programs will demonstrate educational and social benefits and exhibit positive behavioral changes.

Indicator	2014-15 Pennsylvania Result
Improved math grade from fall to spring	43 percent
Elementary	46 percent
Middle and high school	42 percent
Improved English (reading) grade from fall to spring	44 percent
Elementary	46 percent
Middle and high school	42 percent
Improved from not proficient to proficient or above in reading on state assessments (elementary)	<i>Not reported for 2014-15</i>
Improved from not proficient to proficient or above in math on state assessments (middle and high school)	<i>Not reported for 2014-15</i>
Improved homework completion and class participation (teacher-reported)	56 percent
Elementary	56 percent
Middle and high school	56 percent
Improved behavior (teacher-reported)	47 percent
Elementary	42 percent
Middle and high school	49 percent

Objective 2: 21st Century Community Learning Centers will offer high-quality enrichment opportunities that positively affect student outcomes such as school attendance and academic performance, and result in decreased disciplinary actions or other adverse behaviors.

Indicator 2.1: The percentage of 21st Century centers reporting emphasis in at least one core academic area.

Indicator 2.2: The percentage 21st Century centers offering enrichment and support activities in other areas.

Information for these indicators was not available because of changes in federal reporting.

Reflections, Implications, and Considerations for Improvement

Based on evaluation findings and implementation of the state evaluation, evaluators offer recommendations for improvement of Pennsylvania's 21st Century Community Learning Centers program and its evaluation.

1. Stakeholders, as a whole, are satisfied with Pennsylvania's 21st Century programs.

Recommendation: Grantees should ensure that stakeholder feedback is considered in the development and implementation of programming. In areas where stakeholders indicated dissatisfaction, grantees should look further into reasons for dissatisfaction and identify strategies to address these areas, if appropriate and possible

2. Based on the monitoring site visit reports received, 50 percent of grantees monitored and reported were in compliance with all program requirements and quality indicators. The remaining grantees were meeting or exceeding 90 percent or more of the compliance items that applied to them. However, monitoring site visit results were not available for 10 grantees.

Recommendation: Grantees should continue to operate within the requirements of the program. All grantees should review the monitoring self-assessment tool on a regular basis to ensure that their program meets minimum program expectations. Additionally, grantees may find that strategies or comment options in the self-assessment instrument may provide ideas or strategies for program operation or implementation. PDE and technical assistance providers should consider planning training or support offerings for those areas with in development or noncompliant ratings. That said, advisory board requirements have been changed and are no longer required, so emphasis should not be placed on that element unless otherwise indicated.

Evaluator's note: PDE has already put into place new procedures related to monitoring report completion by securing the services of external monitors. This should address the monitoring report completion challenge. In the course of planning for these new procedures, PDE should consider instituting and enforcing deadlines for monitoring report completion that ensures grantees receive their reports within an amount of time that allows the grantee to address findings and make changes for improvement. Reports made available to grantees many months after the visit do not support grantee success or program efficiency.

3. Grantees shared program anecdotes and highlights in their PA Grantee Report and evaluators have heard about program successes and positive experiences from PDE and the Center for Schools and Communities.

Recommendation: Evaluators will continue to consider how the evaluation structure provides opportunities for grantees to report on program successes.

4. Parent feedback, monitoring reports, and PA Grantee Report responses indicate that parent involvement opportunities may be missing or insufficient for some grantees. Grantee feedback indicates that parent involvement is a challenge. Parent involvement is a program requirement.

Recommendation: Grantees should identify and implement additional strategies to offer and encourage participation in parent involvement opportunities. Technical assistance providers should consider additional parent involvement topics for state and regional trainings. PDE should continue to reinforce parent involvement opportunity requirements and provide guidance as to state expectations for such activities.

5. The incongruity of the fiscal years and contract years for 21st Century programs and the federal reporting year not only cause confusion among grantees, but also result in grantees/cohorts being included in only a portion of reporting, as their programs operated only a portion of the federal reporting year. This may result in inconclusive findings at the state level. Also, misalignment of the program years and fiscal years does not allow grantees to maximize their potential for positively influencing student outcomes.

Recommendation: PDE should consider options for more closely aligning the program year and fiscal/contract years for future funding opportunities.

6. Changes to the federal reporting system, its content, and its functionality made the 2014-15 year a difficult one to evaluate. While states were advised that data elements were expected to be similar, information was requested in slightly different ways causing confusion for programs at the state and local levels. Training and technical assistance did not alleviate these issues. Availability of grantee-reported information, reports, or extracts from 21APR this first year was very limited and late in being available, causing delays in the state evaluation. A number of data elements that Pennsylvania used in its evaluation were eliminated at the federal level and as such, unavailable for examination. While the system itself appears easier to use than its predecessor, some of the changes to the system make it more difficult and time-consuming, most notably reporting information three times per year instead of once and splitting the information into three terms instead of two. While reducing the number of reporting elements in the system makes it easier for grantees to report, any benefit of this reduction is negated by the multiple reporting terms. This has also resulted in an increase in state resources committed to reporting, as grantee follow-up now must occur three times per year to ensure grantee report completion.

Next steps: The Pennsylvania 21st Century evaluation team, in collaboration with PDE, has already put into place a number of changes to the state evaluation to support grantees and improve information availability, while attempting to ease the reporting burden on grantees.

1. Grantees will now be submitting to the state evaluation team de-identified student outcomes data for regular attendees and center operations details in order to examine results that Pennsylvania has found useful for decision making in the past.
2. The former PA Grantee Report has been replaced by a shorter implementation survey based on past reviews of PA Grantee Report entries and changing data availability.
3. New student data and program data tools were created by the state evaluation team and made available to grantees to better align with federal term reporting.

The evaluation of Pennsylvania's 21st Century Community Learning Centers programs is intended to provide program results and information that PDE can use to plan for the future and provide technical assistance to grantees. Results are based upon the data available and provided by the program and its grantees.